

NEWS RELEASE

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Carol A. Murray, Commissioner

For Immediate Release

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SARAH LONG BRIDGE (PORTSMOUTH, NH – KITTERY, ME)
NOW EXPECTED TO REOPEN BY MID-DECEMBER
INTERIM REPAIR WORK UNDERWAY UTILIZING SPARE CABLES

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation and the Maine Department of Transportation, in cooperation with the Interstate Bridge Authority, announce interim bridge repair work is underway that is expected to significantly reduce the previously announced closure period for the Sarah Mildred Long lift bridge over the Piscataqua River between Portsmouth, New Hampshire and Kittery, Maine.

Due to the availability of usable replacement cables from the Maine DOT, and the subsequent mobilization of private contractors, temporary repair work now underway is expected to allow the Long Bridge to reopen to motor vehicle traffic with normal bridge operations on or about December 15, 2006, weather permitting.

The lift bridge carrying the NH Route 1 Bypass experienced a power outage on Saturday, October 28. Utilizing a portable generator, the bridge was lifted to the raised position on Tuesday, October 31 to allow for the resumption of vital river traffic by large ships. An investigation by Maine DOT divers determined that an underwater cable carrying DC electrical current to power a key bridge lift motor had somehow been damaged. The initial projection of a required five-month bridge closure was based upon allowing 120 days for the manufacture of a new specialized cable, along with additional time for installation and necessary repair work.

Cianbro Corporation of Pittsfield, Maine and Yates Electrical of Durham, New Hampshire are the private contractors working on the project. The cost of the interim repairs is estimated at more than \$400,000. The review of options for permanent repairs to the Long Bridge continues. That project is likely to take place during the spring of 2007, pending funding.

Work by NHDOT forces also continues in Portsmouth on a connector road between Market Street and the NH Route 1 Bypass southbound to help enhance traffic flow to businesses in the area. This new road is expected to open on or around December 1.

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